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ANTIDOTE

TO

“West-Indian Sketches.”

DRAWN

FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

No. VII.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

NECESSITY OF A TOTAL CHANGE

IN THE

SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT

OF

THE AFRICAN INSTITUTION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR WHITMORE AND FENN,

CHURCH LANE.

1817.

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PRINTED BY W. SMITH AND CO. KING STREET, SEVEN DIALS.

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“ West Indian Sketches, &c.”

THE Editor of the West Indian Sketches,—after treating our poor Antidote with great contempt, designating the arguments it contains as “those privileges of weakness, which he would even feel disposed to acknowledge and respect,”—deigns, at length, to think it worthy of some notice. After assuring us that “in joining our harsh and feeble note, to swell the dissonant chorus of our fellows, we only prove our impotence and malignity;”—after telling us that he need only “refer us back for our refutation,” to his former productions,—he finds that something more than mere declamation is necessary to vindicate his character as an impartial and candid writer. Accordingly—he has entered into a long “*explanation of the conclusions he sought to establish*” in the minds of his readers, in identifying the English Colonial system with that, described by Dr. Pinckard as existing in Dutch Guiana. But so far is his “explanation” from being satisfactory—so far is it from redeeming his character for fairness and liberality, that it involves him still deeper in the labyrinth of his own evasive arguments.

He complains of (to use his own expression) — “the cunning with which we have spied out, exaggerated, and dilated upon unimportant mistakes.” That we have spied them out is most true: true—and cunningly, if it please him to have it so; but whether we have exaggerated, or unnecessarily dilated upon them, will best appear by our preceding numbers;—let them speak for themselves. And “*unimportant mistakes!*” can mistakes on a subject

like the present,—a subject involving the prosperity and wealth of the country at large, the character and fortunes, perhaps the lives of many thousands, connected with the Colonies,—be *unimportant*? Are we to be gravely told that “in giving fundamental facts, which were to demonstrate the unexampled iniquity of the West Indian system, which were to supply unavoidable inferences to the hearts and understandings of his readers”—his mistakes are “unimportant”? We must acknowledge, as the Editor observes of us, that “we labor under a heavy infirmity,” and cannot understand the lessons, which this reasoning is intended to teach.

Still less do we comprehend on what principles of candour the Editor can attempt to “justify” his omission of the numerous and important passages in Dr. P.’s work, which express a favorable opinion of the general treatment of the negroes. But he does attempt it! yes, after having collated, with great care, every circumstance mentioned by his author, which he thought would prejudice the colonies, omitting all those passages, which regard the general contentment and happiness of the slaves; he sits down quite satisfied that he has fairly “demonstrated the nature of the West Indian system.” He declares, in so many words, that “for his part he feels no difficulty in justifying the omission of the * passage

* (See Antidote No. 1—p. 5) The passage is one, which we brought home to him as having unfairly suppressed, but as it is only one out of many others, which he equally omitted, we presume the Editor meant “passages” and not “passage.”

in question," because!—"he was not then engaged in a critical examination of Dr. P.'s opinion, or of his inferences. He had only to do with the facts themselves. He appealed to him as a witness, and not as a reasoner. With the most perfect reliance on Dr. P.'s accuracy in the relation of such incidents as fell under his own observation, he might even be allowed to dispute the soundness of the opinions, which he deduced from them."

So then! in bringing forward a work to illustrate his proposition of the necessity of a change in our colonial system he may (because they do not answer his purpose) conceal his author's sentiments and impressions regarding the actual state of that system, although he acknowledges him to be intelligent, impartial, "free from prejudice or party feeling!" This is certainly a very honorable and candid rule of argument;—very convenient for such writers as the Editor of the West Indian Sketches, who have a declining cause to support. But how are we to obtain any correct notions of the society existing in the West Indies, unless from the accounts of enlightened and impartial travellers, who reason from personal observation and experience. Dr. P. had "seen the negroes in all their habits of life—at their labor—in the fields—in their huts—in the sugar works—about the houses—at their moments of rest and retirement, and amidst all their various occupations and modes of employment"—to whom, then, can we more safely refer in our enquiries into their real condition?

But we are prepared to disprove the Editor's assertion that "he did not appeal to Dr. Pinckard as a reasoner, and that he had nothing to do with his opinions and inferences." We are prepared to show that he *did*, throughout his whole work, refer to Dr. P. as a reasoner, and endeavoured to make us believe that Dr. P.'s impressions and infer-

ences supported his own arguments. For this purpose we shall quote his own words, which he seems entirely to have forgotten in his anxiety to justify himself.

In No. 1, he began thus; "A Second Edition of Dr. Pinckard's notes on the West Indies has recently made its appearance. No publication could be more seasonable. *It exhibits the impressions, made on the mind of an intelligent spectator, at first evidently prejudiced in favor of West Indian manners, who has had an opportunity of seeing with his own eyes the real nature and effects of colonial bondage. It seems the more necessary to bring forward to the view of the public, at this particular time, a witness so respectable, and so far removed from any suspicion of partiality or party feeling; since, in the warmth of the conflict on West India subjects, the colonial partizans appear disposed to deny the existence even of the most prominent features of their own system, for example the practice of driving.*"

In No. 3, he compares the testimony of his author with that of officers of high rank, Admirals and Generals who have served in the West Indies, and who have given their evidence in favour of the humanity of the planters: he prefers Dr. Pinckard's opinion to theirs, because "he was not satisfied with *first impressions!* he was determined to judge for himself."

In No. 5, he refers to Dr. Pinckard's "*reasoning*" on the subject of slavery, and records, with some degree of exultation, Dr. P.'s opinion "that, compared to slavery, the restrictions of military discipline are as exquisite freedom." In short he was anxious to convince his readers that Dr. P.'s impressions, on the subject of the Colonial System, were perfectly in unison with his own. So much so, that when we venture to raise "our harsh and feeble note," and bring forward passages from Dr. P.'s work to shew

that he has unfairly represented the opinions of his author, he writes another Sketch, No. 6, and endeavors, at considerable length, to prove that he did "not pervert Dr. P.'s meaning, or misstate his sentiments"—He even "appeals to any man of common candour whether he did not fairly state the *impressions* on Dr. P.'s mind, and which pervade his book," &c. &c. and "whether these *impressions* be not" so and so.

But now in No. 7, when he finds, on reflection, that his misrepresentations are brought completely home to him,—when he finds it proved that Dr. P.'s impression in 1797 was, that the negroes were well treated by their owners,—that they were in general amply fed, fitly clothed, and tenderly watched in sickness—he turns round and says, "I have nothing to do with his impressions. It is true, he is an intelligent and disinterested spectator; neither is his knowledge superficial, nor his judgement hastily formed; but—as his opinions and inferences do not answer my purpose, I decline to accept him as a reasoner!" He thought Dr. Pinckard's sentiments of great importance to his Sketches, so long as he could give them a false colouring; so long as he remained unanswered, he was anxious to "exhibit the impressions of an intelligent spectator." But, once bring his productions to the light—once show him to himself in the charmed mirror of truth,—and, Proteus-like, he assumes another shape:—

--- --- "sua non immemor artis,
Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum."

He then discards Dr. P.'s opinions and inferences as totally irrelevant—and has no difficulty in justifying the omission of them!

But this is not all: we must go even yet farther to give our readers a perfect idea of this writer's love for truth and liberality; he says, "the opinion, expressed by Dr. Pinckard, in favor of West Indian humanity, was before he had been FIVE WEEKS in the West Indies, and was contra-

dicted by his maturer judgment;" he tells us, that these "sentiments of his author were immature,—*inconsistent not only with the general current of his facts, but with the opinions on the subject of West Indian slavery, which he afterwards expressed.*" Now, is this the fact? is it true that Dr. P.'s sentiments in favour of West Indian humanity were corrected by his maturer judgment? We are content that the answer to this question shall decide whether the Editor's assertions are deserving of credit, or not:—and Dr. P.'s own words shall give the answer. In September 1797, just before he left the West Indies, where he had been EIGHTEEN MONTHS he thus expresses himself:—"From much and careful observation I am authorized to remark, that the planters in general are humane and merciful, and do not exact immoderate toil; with them the slaves have a certain round of duty, which cannot be regarded as excessive or severe, being such as may be performed without any hurtful exertion. For a considerable time after their arrival,* it is usual to put them only to light work, treating them with gentleness, and making their employment more an object of amusement than of fatigue. Thus they are gradually trained to the common round of toil, which, after all that is said and written upon the subject, is not so severe and oppressive, as general opinion in Europe represents it. It is compulsory, and therefore performed with reluctance; but the labor is not more heavy, nor the day longer than that of the poor in other countries. They are not required to toil during more than twelve hours of the twenty-four; and due intervals are allowed for

* That is, after their arrival in the West Indies from Africa. For, be it still remembered, all these observations of Dr. P. were long before the abolition of the slave trade, which he thought would be the most effectual means of improving the condition of the negroes.

taking rest and food. The climate is undoubtedly more exhausting than that of Europe, but the quantum of work performed is proportionate. The labor of an industrious English peasant or mechanic amounts, perhaps, to three or four times as much, within the twelve hours, as is accomplished within the same period by a slave. Besides which, it should be taken into the account, that the temperature is congenial to the negroes; in proof of which, I have observed it to be a common practice among them, (instead of retiring into the shade,) to eat their dinners and bask away the whole hour allotted them in the open field, exposed to the direct rays of the sun. It is always the interest of the master to be kind and considerate towards his slaves; for, if they become sickly and unfit for labor, they will be only an useless expense to him. Among the planters who possess large bodies of them, their hours of rest and toil are regular and proportioned; they are fitly clothed and amply fed, and are less frequently treated with severity. It is among a different class of owners, whose bread is earned by the toil of a smaller number, or who have only a single slave, that the unhappy blacks are ill fed, hard-worked, and often punished."

Such were the sentiments of Dr. Pinckard,—not after five weeks residence—but on the experience of eighteen months, and just before he left the West Indies:—"from much and careful observation," says he, "I am authorized to remark that the planters in general are humane and merciful,"—and yet the Editor declares that Dr. P.'s testimony in favor of West Indian humanity was contradicted by his maturer judgement! Let any one read the preceding extracts and many other similar passages in Dr. P.'s work and judge whether the Editor has not altogether "perverted the opinions of his author." Perhaps he will call this one of his "unimportant mistakes," but in our view of them these mistakes, which recur so often, and bear

such evidence of wilful misrepresentation, are neither unimportant, abstractedly considered, nor in the inferences, which were intended to be drawn from them.

The Editor proceeds to defend the African Institution for publishing their libel against Sir J. Leith's *Aides-de-camp* in Antigua. His observations are very ill timed, and he has proved himself rather an injudicious advocate; for shortly after his *Sketch* was printed the Directors were found guilty, on a criminal prosecution in the Court of King's Bench, of exercising the influence of the Society for the worst purposes of calumny. We should not now refer to the subject, but for some observations, which have escaped the Editor. We know the feelings which this and other recent circumstances have excited amongst some of the most distinguished Subscribers of the Institution; and we should, therefore, rather have abstained from again bringing this disgraceful business before the public. But the Editor of the *Sketches* seems to hold out a threat that the Directors of the African Institution will continue to persevere in that course, which has already done so much mischief.—So little do they seem to be aware of the opinion, which the public has formed of their measures, that the Editor says "they may safely appeal to the dispassionate judgement of their country for their vindication: and experience may instruct them that its approbation—that just reward of upright public service—will not be withheld, because, in their arduous struggle against oppression, supported by wealth and influence, they may occasionally have fallen into errors, consistent with honest intentions, and with conduct essentially judicious and wise." They even "pity us, because we know so little of the *resolute self devotion of patriotism and humanity*, as to hope that our attacks will deter any, who have embarked in this cause, from its strenuous and persevering prosecution?"

THE SELF-DEVOTION OF PATRIOTS

OTISM and HUMANITY! where is the SELF-DEVOTION of subverting the whole system of our Colonial establishments, in the ruin of which they can suffer but remotely?—"Mankind are often compelled to admire even the mistaken or misguided zeal of those well meaning reformers, who heroically involve themselves in the ruin they occasion. The self-devotion of the Directors is of a very different character. Secured against all individual danger, by a distance of above a thousand leagues from the theatre of their exploits, they try their ruinous experiments on the lives and properties of others, without any risk to themselves"—and dignify their principles of Emancipation to the negroes with the title of "self-devotion." But PATRIOTISM too!—Patriotism is indeed a noble sentiment—it is that zeal for the service of the State, which neither hope nor fear can influence us to forego;—it is that ardor in defence of the happiness and honor of our country—that patient endurance of difficulties and danger—that virtue, in fine, which animates us to all that is great, and good, and noble among men. But where is the Patriotism of those, who would stop the very source of our national prosperity, who would at once sacrifice the lives and fortunes of thousands, in the pursuit of their own visionary schemes of popularity, and who glory in identifying the character of their countrymen with that of foreigners, in all those features which degrade human nature. And above all—where shall we look for the HUMANITY of the Directors? In their own pamphlets indeed they are not wanting to themselves:—they are sensible that the very name of humanity bears a charm, that captivates the hearts of Englishmen, and they lay claim to its almost exclusive possession.—They rejoice "that they are not as other men are," and run over the whole

catalogue of their virtues,* with unsatisfied delight. But where, we repeat, *shall we find* their humanity—their charity and benevolence? where is the charity of presumptuously passing sentence of condemnation against whole communities, charging them with almost as many crimes as they themselves profess to have virtues?—Where is the spirit of benevolence and philanthropy in exciting the once happy and contented slaves of our West India colonies to turn upon their masters? where the humanity of making experiments in revolution, which must bring immeasurable evils on all who take a part in them?

The following sentiments will give a tolerably clear exposition of the sort "of self-devotion, patriotism, and humanity," which distinguish the leading Directors of the Institution.

"In every delineation of the colonial system, it is of the utmost moment to mark the identity of its features among nations, who have scarcely any other institutions in common. If it was in the English colonies only, or in the Dutch colonies only, that these ferocious cruelties were perpetrated, some defect in the colonial code of that particular nation, or in its administration, might be assigned as the cause. But when we find that the Dutch, the French, the Portuguese, the English, the Spanish, both on the African coast, and in the West Indies, assume, on this subject, one common character: that the crimes of Barbadoes, Nevis, &c. find their parallel in the

* "Works of mercy"—"learning, genius, and charity"—"eminent desert"—"manly and vigorous minds"—"profound knowledge"—"honest intentions"—"pre-eminent virtue"—"sleepless energies of mind"—"aversion to equivocation on the statement of their principles"—"profound knowledge, powerful style, high tone of moral feeling"—"accomplished statesmen, learned in the theory and practised in the art of government," with "resolute self-devotion, patriotism, and humanity"—are a few of the virtues and qualifications to which the Directors lay claim.

Brasils, in Dutch Guiana, in Martinique, in the Mauritius, in Cuba; the similarity of guilt indicates some common character, to which it is to be referred. However differing in laws, descent, manners, and religion, the colonists of France, England, Holland, &c. wonderfully concur in their general estimate and treatment of their unhappy bondsmen. And the common principles, which can alike harden the hearts of these different colonists, are fear, avarice, and pride, passions which are, each singly, of force, when they rule the bosom with absolute sway, to bring to light the most hateful propensities of our nature. When united, and entrusted with unlimited dominion, they are capable of converting men into fiends."

We do not give these extracts in order to refute them, it would be a poor compliment to the understandings of our readers, if we could be induced to make any reply to such general and opprobrious calumnies. But we call upon the Subscribers of the African Institution, to mark this system with their reprobation. We appeal to them whether they can still continue to lend the authority of their names to a Society, which attempts to support its doctrines by such abuse as this.—We know what many of the Subscribers feel respecting the libel contained in the Tenth Report of the African Institution. They are naturally indignant at seeing their names recorded at full length in the many hundred copies of that Report, which were sent forth into the world. They feel that they have, in some measure, —but most improperly—been made parties to the libel. But surely that libel was mild and innocent, when compared with the language we have just quoted, and with the numerous other publications of the Directors.

We beg to call to the recollection of the Subscribers, the objects, for which the Society was established

—In the First Report of the Directors, read to the General Meeting in 1807, we find the following rules and regulations adopted for their government.

"To prevent misconception concerning the views and measures of the African Institution, it may be proper, in the first instance, to declare, that it is the Society's fixed determination not to undertake any religious missions, nor to engage in commercial speculations. It may also be proper to premise, that it will naturally become the duty and care of this Society to watch over the execution of the laws recently enacted in this and other countries, for abolishing the African Slave Trade; to endeavour to prevent the infringement of those laws; and, from time to time, to suggest any means, by which they may be rendered more effectual to their objects; and likewise to endeavour, by communicating information, and by other appropriate methods, to promote the abolition of the Slave Trade by foreign powers.

"The means, which it is proposed to employ for the purpose of promoting civilization and improvement in Africa, are of the following kind:—

"1. To collect and diffuse, throughout this country, accurate information respecting the natural productions of Africa, and, in general, respecting the agricultural and commercial capacities of the African continent, and the intellectual, moral, and political, condition of its inhabitants.

"2. To promote the instruction of the Africans in letters and in useful knowledge, and to cultivate a friendly connection with the natives of that continent.

"3. To endeavour to enlighten the minds of the Africans with respect to their true interests; and to diffuse information amongst them respecting the means, whereby we may improve the present opportunity

of substituting a beneficial commerce in place of the Slave Trade.

" 4. To introduce among them such of the improvements and useful arts of Europe as are suited to their condition.

" 5. To promote the cultivation of the African soil, not only by exciting and directing the industry of the natives, but by furnishing, where it may appear advantageous to do so, useful seeds and plants, and implements of husbandry.

" 6. To introduce amongst the inhabitants beneficial medical discoveries.

" 7. To obtain a knowledge of the principal languages in Africa, and, as has been already found to be practicable, to reduce them to writing, with a view to facilitate the diffusion of information among the natives of that country.

" 8. To employ suitable agents, and to establish correspondence as shall appear advisable, and to encourage and reward individual enterprise and exertion in promoting any of the purposes of the Institution."

The many eminent persons, who contributed to the funds of this Society, no doubt expected that the Directors would adhere to these rules and regulations, as laid down for them by the General Meeting. We apprehend it was not their intention, on becoming Subscribers, to support the political opinions of any particular party, regarding the natural rights of man to freedom and equality—or the constitutional power of the Mother Country to legislate for the colonies. These are fit subjects for the consideration of the Philosopher and the Statesman, but the discussion of them is very ill suited to a Society, established for objects of charity. At least—we believe that such of the Subscribers, as are Members of the two Houses of Parliament, do not require the assistance of the Directors to guide their judgement on these, and other great national questions.

The Directors, however, are of a different opinion—they think the British Parliament "*is bound*," to adopt all their sentiments and opinions, and "to regard Colonial Slavery, as a reproach, which we are called upon to wipe off." They are men of such "pre-eminent talent"—such "accomplished statesmen, learned in the theory, and practised in the art of government,"—that those subjects, which, in the opinion of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Burke, involved the most delicate questions of political justice and prudence, present no obstacles to the "sleepless energies" of their minds. Their "learning, genius, and charity" have enabled them to take a rapid flight over the difficult paths of enquiry and reflection, which to ordinary minds oppose innumerable impediments in the search after truth. They have received the spirit of sanctification, even unto perfect wisdom; and such is their "high tone of moral feeling," that all, who differ from them in opinion, are "either obstinate, and will not, or labor under a still heavier infirmity, and cannot understand reason."

Even Mr. Burke does not escape the "powerful style" of their philippics: "lie," it appears, "is one of the strongest illustrations of one of the worst effects of the French Revolution."—MR. BURKE *one of the strongest illustrations of one of the worst effects of the French Revolution!*—"It produced in him," says Mr. Stephen, "a morbid sensibility to the dangers of reformation, even when his own moral and elevated principles pleaded strongly for the change." Our readers, perhaps, will readily divine the cause of this little ebullition of pique against Mr. Burke's sensibility;—"he was cold, or rather lukewarm in the cause." No! not cold or lukewarm in any good or just cause: but cold and lukewarm he certainly was, when compared with those, whose heated imaginations so far outstep the bounds of prudence.

He did not, indeed, permit his imagination to mislead his judgement—but tempered the warmth of his zeal by his profound knowledge of mankind, and the depth of his reasoning. If this be a morbid sensibility to the dangers of reform, we believe there are few amongst us, who would not readily plead guilty to the charge.

Not only do the Directors thus assail the opinions of distinguished individuals, when they are of a different character from their own, but Parliament itself must bow to their superior judgement. They tell us that “we cannot be acquitted before God and our consciences, if, after having the enormities of this system unveiled to our view, we satisfy ourselves with a few ineffectual wishes for its reformation. *The Parliament and people of England are bound to take measures for raising our fellow subjects of the West Indies from their present state of degradation and suffering. The guilt of its unmitigated continuance will otherwise be theirs.*” And again we have the following very modest exposition of their sentiments and pretensions. “If a general registry of slaves be obtained, there *we are content* that the reforming of slavery by Act of Parliament shall end. Should, however, this most efficacious and inoffensive remedy be withheld, let not our opponents tax us with inconsistency when *We* resort to other Parliamentary means for the relief of the unfortunate slaves. Denied a fair trial of the expedient *we* prefer, *we* shall be driven to others, in which we have less confidence indeed, but which it would be opprobrious in that case to leave untried. At all events *We* know our duty, and with God’s help we will perform it. We will not leave considerably more than half a million of helpless fellow-creatures in a state, opprobrious not only to the British government, under which they live, but to human nature itself;—a state, which must soon lead them to their utter exter-

mination, as it has to that of myriads who preceded them in it,—without making the most strenuous and unwearyed efforts for their relief.”

Was it for all this that the Society was instituted? was it for the Emancipation of the slaves and the establishment of that negro Empire, with which we are threatened?—An Empire like that of Hayti, where British merchants are to be thumb-screwed and tortured at the will of a ferocious black? * No

* See Mr. Davison’s Petition to the House of Commons, on the 4th of this month, respecting Christophe’s cruelty towards him. We may, perhaps, after this, be permitted to differ with the “Philanthropists of the new school,” who are so warm in this man’s praises. Mr. Marryat gives the following “account of their proceedings on a late public occasion.”—it “illustrates the extravagant extent to which their principles are carried.”

“An advertisement announced, that the members and friends of the African and Asiatic Society would dine together, at the Freemasons’ Tavern, on the 27th of March last, the day the Report of the African Institution was read; and that a number of Africans and Asiatics were expected to dine in an adjoining room. The tables were laid out for a far more numerous company than attended. Mr. Wilberforce took the chair. After dinner, the company drank the usual toasts: the King, the Prince Regent, the Queen, and the rest of the Royal Family, but, *without rising from their seats.*

“Mr. Stephen then arose, and apologized for addressing the meeting, which he was induced to do, as being more accustomed to speak in public than Mr. Prince Saunders, a man of colour, who had just returned from a mission to St. Domingo; and whose communications from thence he would lay before them, appealing to Mr. Saunders for the correctness of his statement. Mr. Stephen addressed himself in a great degree to the Africans and Asiatics, who had only been separated from the company by a screen, drawn across one end of the room, from behind which they had by this time emerged, and were standing round the tables. He dwelt upon the infamy of supposing, that the difference of colour in the skin could occasion any inferiority of the mind. From a warm eulogy upon black as contrasted with white, he slid into a panegyric upon

wonder that all, who have been to Africa, and had an opportunity

Christophe, whom he described as an ornament to the African name, and an honour to the human race—as the friend of the immortal Toussaint—the patriot, liberator, and exalter of his fellow-creatures—the hero who had broken their bonds of slavery, and raised them to freedom and independence—liberal—enlightened—beneficent—merciful—and, above all, a sincere and pious Christian.

“The health of King Henry of Hayti was then proposed; but the waiter who repeated the toast from behind the chair of Mr. Wilberforce, being apparently not very conversant in the history of this new black dynasty, gave, in a loud voice, King Henry the Eighth; which occasioned much laughter and some confusion. The mistake, however, was soon rectified, and his black Majesty was drank, *the whole company standing, with three times three, and enthusiastic acclamations.*

“Mr. Prince Saunders confirmed the details of Mr. Stephen. He repeated the earnestness with which Christophe longed for religious instruction, and his disdain for the trappings of state. He particularly dwelt on the assurances he had given his Majesty, his court, and his people, while in St. Domingo, of the sure alliance and aid they might expect from Mr. Wilberforce, and his associates in this country, of whom he expressed himself in terms of the highest admiration.

“The secretary of the society next congratulated the company on the display of African talent which they had just heard, and said he would favour them with another specimen of its superiority, by calling on Mr. Paul for a speech.

“This Mr. Paul repeated a composition, something between a speech and a sermon: but by this time the party-coloured children had made their way to the table, and were delivering their sentiments so loudly, on the relative merits of the nuts, figs, and oranges of the desert, as to give no small interruption to Mr. Paul, and render much of his oration inaudible. It appeared, however, to consist principally of a mixture of religious instruction, more connected with the mysteries of the christian faith than with moral advice, and of fulsome compliments to Mr. Wilberforce, interlarded with texts of scripture. He congratulated himself on the happiness he never expected to enjoy, of seeing face to face the saviour and benefactor of the blacks, the friend of the whole human race.

“Mr. Wilberforce, who sat “attentive to his own applause,” declared, when

of judging from personal observation, express so much disappoint-

another expressed a wish to address the chair, that he was glad to find it was one of his own countrymen; for after the admirable specimens of eloquence they had just heard from their brethren of colour, he began to be apprehensive they had monopolized all the talents, and that he should feel ashamed of his own complexion. Mr. Stephen, determined to take the lead in this gratuitous contest of humility, intimated that he actually felt that shame which Mr. Wilberforce only began to apprehend.

“Dr. Stoddart prefaced the health of Mr. Wilberforce, by an eulogium upon that gentleman; according to which; Mr. Wilberforce was the greatest living being in this hemisphere, as King Henry of Hayti was of the other. The world was full of their fame; and nothing but the universal conflagration, which is to devour the universe, would prevent its continuing to resound with their praises.

“The health of Mr. Wilberforce having been drank with appropriate honours, that gentleman expressed himself gratified with the approbation his humble exertions had received; but modestly ascribed part of the success which had attended them, to the able assistance of his friends. He then gave Mr. Stephen as high-sounding praises, as he had himself received from Dr. Stoddart.

“Mr. Stephen pronounced a second harangue; and in illustrating the merits of Dr. Stoddart, ascribed the Abolition of the Slave Trade by Louis the XVIIIth, to the public writings of that gentleman.

“Dr. Stoddart repaid all the compliments he had received, with interest; and translated an address, composed by a French gentleman present, of which the praises of Mr. Wilberforce were the leading theme.

“In the early part of the entertainment, a black man led in a white woman, with a party-coloured child, the fruit of their mutual loves. This interesting group paraded round the room, as a proof of the happy result of that union of colours and races, which all true philanthropists are so anxious to promote.

“When the Africans and Asiatics introduced themselves from behind the screen, which at first separated them from the company, a medley of blacks and mulattoes appeared; many of them mendicants, whose faces were recognized, as constantly plying at their respective stands in the public streets; and in the true spirit of equality and fraternity, wine was handed about to them to drink with their benefactors.

ment at the system there pursued by the Directors. No wonder that "the colony of Sierra Leone is in a dreadful state of depravity—and that the rising generation are more immoral and dissolute than the inhabitants of any other part of Africa;"—when the attention of the Directors is occupied on subjects, altogether foreign from the views of the Institution,—and the time, which should be employed in the civilization of Africa, is taken up in dangerous schemes of reform in the colonies in America.

We have endeavoured to shew, in one or two instances, the very improper calumnies, by which these schemes are supported:—in No. II. of the Antidote we referred to the libel, which the Directors published against Sir James Leith's aides-de-camp. The Editor of the Sketches is much offended at this:—He says "we have introduced that subject because we have discovered the weakness and danger of our ground;" he affects to think that this has little to do with the question before us, and observes that the inferences founded on his West Indian Sketches would not be less legitimately deduced *if the Institution were suppressed to-morrow as a public nuisance*. Now—if he is not sensible that the "inferences to be drawn from his Sketches" will do more to suppress the Institution "as a public nuisance" than almost any thing else,—we believe his friends are more clear sighted than himself.

We believe that the Sketches, and the libel against Sir James Leith's aides-de-camp, added to the manner in which the funds have been applied, and the mismanagement of the Directors in our unfortunate African settlements, *have excited a strong disposition amongst the Subscribers "to suppress the Institution altogether as a public nuisance."*

They already feel that, in continuing to lend their sanction to the measures, which we have so anx-

iously deprecated, they will become responsible for the evils which must be the consequence of them. But if they express themselves so strongly, on being made acquainted with one or two instances of this system of misrepresentation, what would they think and say if they were to read all the publications of this Institution, containing aspersions equally unfounded, and even more insulting to the whole West India body? The fact is the "Reports" and "Special Reports" the pamphlets, the reviews, and the public addresses of the Directors are one series of libels against the general body of Proprietors in the Colonies. The Directors claim it as a right—an exclusive privilege—to send out to the world their printed addresses and resolutions, without any regard to the personal feelings of those, whose character they assail. They appear insensible to the danger of holding up the White Population as the "puny multitude," the "small—but oppressive minority," whom the Negroes may despise and resist with impunity.

We have not forgotten the Address, which was widely circulated last year on the state of the finances of the Society. Of this Address the Directors say—"they thought it expedient to authorize the circulation of a large number of copies."—After assuring the public that "the labours of the Institution have been great, &c." the Address proceeds thus; "The Institution has anxiously watched for a favorable opportunity of suggesting measures, which should tend to ameliorate the condition, and raise the moral character of those despised and oppressed fellow-men, the slaves and coloured population of our West Indian Islands; and it is determined to persevere, until the general feeling of the public shall gradually overcome those deep rooted prejudices and mistaken views, which have been so long opposed to the happiness and

rights of the enslaved Africans and people of color in those colonies."

We should be happy to know how many of the Directors attended at the Institution, when it was "thought expedient" to promulgate these sentiments. That the small party who dictated the Address, and who manage the whole affairs of the Society, were present, there can be no doubt; but we doubt exceedingly whether any others gave their sanction to it.—Sure we are that such of the Directors, as we have the pleasure to know, and for whom we entertain the highest respect, have never lent themselves to the circulation of the unworthy calumnies, which constantly appear in their name. Here then is the whole secret of the system.—One or two of the Directors, having prepared an Address, or a Special Report, or a West Indian Sketch, call a meeting. The quorum assembles—(*for observe, by the rules of the society, five Directors make a quorum*) the Address or Sketch is read—and provided it has enough of declamation against "the West Indian Aristocracy," and is occasionally enlivened by a modest reference to their own "self-devotion, patriotism and humanity," it is carried nemine contradicente. And this is published as the address of the INSTITUTION!

We can picture to ourselves the imposing scene at one of these meetings;—we can imagine that the business of the *Court of Directors* being very soon disposed of, and prayers read, each gentleman takes up his hat and stick and walks piously home, satisfied that if the Address to the public has not really expressed the sentiments of the Directors in general, or of the Subscribers—it will at least produce "*unavoidable inferences*," which will answer the purpose quite as well.

Let our readers observe the pains which have been taken to give this Address the whole weight and in-

fluence of the Society. It is headed in large capitals

AFRICAN INSTITUTION,
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

PRESIDENT AND PATRON,
and the public are told that "it is principally composed of persons, who had distinguished themselves by their indefatigable exertions to procure the abolition of the Slave Trade."—What is the unavoidable inference? surely it is this—if his Royal Highness, and those distinguished persons, who were most active in the abolition of the Slave Trade—thus publicly declare that West Indian Proprietors are remorseless and cruel—if they say that the situation of the negro is inhuman and oppressive, there can be no doubt of the truth of it; there can be no doubt that "the deep rooted prejudices and mistaken views of the master have long opposed the happiness and rights of the enslaved Africans and people of color." Observe too how extensively there calumnies have been disseminated.

The Directors say that "*the funds continuing to be still further reduced by various urgent claims*," they authorized the circulation of a large number of copies of this Address to the public on the state of the finances of the Institution.—The copies have accordingly been *widely circulated under the direction of a Committee*; but sufficient time has not elapsed to afford an opportunity of judging of the effect produced by this representation." Certain, however, it is that, without considerable additions to the funds, the Directors will be materially cramped in their endeavours to forward the *original views* of the Institution; to which, indeed, their means have never been equal, and are now become more inadequate than ever."

Thus—because the funds of the Institution "continue to be still further reduced," the Directors think themselves entitled (particularly as

it is for objects of philanthropy and benevolence) to post the West India body, in every town throughout the kingdom, as remorseless and cruel,—as a class of men whose “prejudices and mistaken views” are to be rooted out only by *their* determined perseverance! A very praiseworthy and honourable proceeding this—not to say a word of the arrogance of it) for the Directors of an Institution, whose original views were objects of charity!—and then they are very much surprised at being convicted for libel! they cannot understand how the law is to punish their “unimportant mistakes” and “incidental errors,” which they assure us “are connected neither with wilful perversity, nor with corrupt intention!”

And now with regard to the finances of the Institution? How does it happen that they are as low as to cramp the original views of the Institution? How is it that the Directors are unable to “proceed with vigour in the prosecution of those great objects detailed in their first report?” They inform us that “the funds have been still further reduced by various urgent claims:”—but this is not a sufficient explanation upon a subject of so much importance.—It appears from the very confused accounts, which are published in the reports, that out of £12,000, which has been collected amongst the Subscribers, only £2,500 has been applied to the improvement and civilization of Africa; whilst above 5 or £6000 has been lavished in the expense of publishing the Pamphlets and Reports of the Directors, and preparing petitions to the Legislature, on the subject of the foreign Slave Trade. We cannot express our regret and astonishment at seeing that TWO HUNDRED GUINEAS was paid in one item “for 400 copies of a work on mitigation of slavery, *chiefly intended for distribution in the West Indies!*” FOR DIS-

TRIBUTION IN THE WEST INDIES! We confess this excites strange ideas in our minds, and forcibly recalls to our recollection that part of Mr. Pallmer’s speech in the House of Commons, which related to the subject of *publications distributed in the West Indies.*—

“Mr. Pallmer said that all the principles, to which he referred, had operated by a combined influence upon the minds of the negroes;—that pains had been taken to disseminate the publications, which contained these principles—that the negroes sought for English publications for information, and looked for arrivals from England for it.—Was it then possible to resist the belief and the persuasion that the agitation of these subjects, and the present sad situation of the colonies were cause and effect?” But leaving, for the present, the consideration of this circumstance, which, however, is one of deep anxiety, and imposes a heavy responsibility on those, who have encouraged so dangerous a system,—we beg to ask, how the improvement and civilization of Africa can be promoted by a distribution of these works in the West Indies? has this any reference to the “original views” of the Institution! and can we be surprized that “the poor African settlers are in greater poverty and wretchedness (as the Chief Judge of Sierra Leone declares them to be) than when they were taken under the care of the Institution;” since the funds, which were raised for their benefit, have been diverted to other objects? We find that the Directors, after all the representations they have made about their enlightened and extensive exertions, have, in the course of nine years, appropriated the sum of £2,500 to the first great object of the Society! Yes—the instruction of “ill-fated Africa and her sons” in letters and useful knowledge, the introduction amongst

them of the improvements and arts of Europe—the supply of seeds, plants, and implements of husbandry, and the communication to them of beneficial medical discoveries,—have all been accomplished for £2,500 !*

Such is the delusion under which the Subscribers have been kept in regard to African affairs :—such the system which a few individuals have pursued towards our West India Colonies, for the accomplishment of their own views of popularity and political influence.

We, therefore, call upon the Subscribers to make the only reparation, now in their power, to the injured feelings of the West Indian Legislatures, and the West Indian communities in general. We call upon them to satisfy the daily increasing anxiety of all those, who are connected with the Colonies, that henceforward the security of their property shall not be compromised by any measures, emanating from the Institution.

We urge this not only on the ground of justice to the Proprietors, but also for the sake of the Negro-population ; because the progress of amelioration will be far more certain and effectual, when the master feels a confidence in the good disposition of his slaves, than when his distrust is excited by a dangerous spirit of impatience and revolt.—The West India communities are anxiously desirous—both for their own interest and security ;—but, above all, for the gratification of their own personal feelings, to promote the happiness and comfort of their slaves. We know that they do not yield to those individuals, who

* About as much as Clerks' salaries, office expenses, and advertisements in the newspapers within the same period.

arrogantly endeavour to calumniate them, in any of the sentiments, which dignify and adorn a manly or a Christian character. But when they perceive that the interference of persons in this country has produced a "growing insubordination" in the minds of the negroes, they are naturally diffident of extending any of those indulgencies, which might appear to be extorted from them through fear.

With regard to the Institution, as it affects Africa, we can only say, that, if it can accomplish any thing for the civilization of the natives, or give the least assistance towards the universal abolition of the Slave Trade, by foreign countries, none will more sincerely offer their meed of approbation to such laudable objects—none will be more ready to assist in giving full effect to the abolition laws, already existing in England, than THE COLONIAL LEGISLATURES.*—We confess, however, that the past experience of so many years does not inspire us with any great confidence. It seems to be generally admitted, that little or nothing has yet been done for the benefit of Africa ; and we fear the small party, who have hitherto conducted the affairs of the Society, are not likely to adopt that consistent, ingenuous, and temperate line of conduct, which can alone ensure its success.

* In confirmation of this, we need only refer to the readiness with which all the colonies (we believe without exception) have adopted the resolution of passing bills for the "Registry of Slaves ;" and whilst we write this, we receive information from Jamaica of another act having been carried through the Legislature of that island, in "furtherance of the provisions of the abolition laws." We hope a similar act will be adopted in the other islands.

